OIT-1202-88

3 0 NOV 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Financial Management

FROM: Edward J. Maloney
                 Director of Information Technology

SUBJECT: Data Processing Support and Service

REFERENCES: A. Your Memo (OF-0314-88) dtd 26 Sep 88, Same Subject

                 B. OIT Memo (OIT-7223-88) dtd 7 Sep 88, Subject: ADP Support
                     to the Office of Finance

                 C. Your Memo, dtd 9 Nov 88, Subject: Change of Service
                     Designation for OIT Dispersed Office Support Positions

1. Reference A identifies concerns of the Office of Financial Management
(OFM), which in the aggregate affect the accomplishment of tasks important to
the entire Agency. These concerns center on four problem areas: system
availability, system response time, output services support, and programming
support.

2. Please be assured that while some differences of opinion remain
concerning the causes of problems identified in reference A, the Office of
Information Technology (OIT) remains committed to provide reliable support to
OFM. I feel that the positive steps taken in references B and C to strengthen
the DOS mechanism supporting OFM should be further reinforced. In recognition
of the technical support and service needs of your organization, and with
particular reference to the issues raised in reference A, _____
will act as the senior point of contact for all OIT data processing support
and service to OFM.

3. _____ will meet with your and my staffs on a regular basis to
review all matters relating to OIT support for OFM. She will maintain
appropriate contacts in OIT to pursue the resolution of specific technical
issues or problems, and she will ensure regular interaction with me and my
Deputy to keep us apprised of the state of OIT support to your organization.

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4. I feel confident that this arrangement will further strengthen the OIT support now provided to the Office of Financial Management.
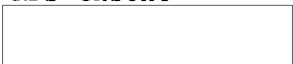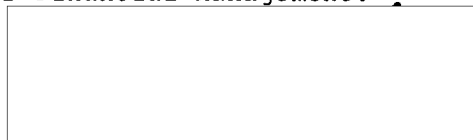
Edward J. Maloney

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2 3 SEP 1988   OIT/TRIS

OF-0314-88

26 September 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Information Technology

FROM: Daniel A. Childs, Jr.
                  Director of Finance

SUBJECT: Data Processing Support and Services

ED: —

1. As you know, the management of financial operations within the Agency is highly dependent on accurate and timely data processing services. This dependency is even more critical during the three budget formulation exercises and at the end of the fiscal year. During my first two months as Director of Finance, one of the issues of which I have become acutely aware is the many system-related problems we are encountering. We have been working with your people to resolve these problems on a case by case basis as they arise, but I am concerned about the apparent general degradation of ADP support and services provided by OIT.

2. The recent problems seem to fall into five general categories:

    A. System Availability:

        We have been experiencing a general degradation in system availability. For example, the lack of availability of the Contract Information System (CONIF III) application has severely impacted our accounts payable responsibility. During a recent 30 work day period, the CONIF III application was down from one to four hours on nine separate days. As a result, our accounts payable production has decreased by nearly 20 percent and the potential for late payment penalty charges increased accordingly. In addition, during the same period, the General Accounting System (GAS) was unavailable for 51 hours. GAS is the Agency's official accounting record for all commitments and obligations; thus a high state of availability is absolutely essential to ensure sound financial management.

        Many of these problems seem to occur during critical points in the accounting cycle, as demonstrated by the difficulties of the past three weeks. At the end of August, one day of processing time was lost due to hardware problems and system

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outages.   In mid September, the special job control language malfunctioned and one dataset was omitted, resulting in incorrect Financial Resources System reports for 14 September. Thus, accurate financial information was not available to the directorates that day. As you know, this year we established a 15 September cut-off date for end-of-year spending, making the availability of accurate financial data critical on 14 September.

Finally, the lack of Cullinet IDMS availability has impacted the development and testing of the Headquarter's portion of the Station Accounting and Reporting System (STARS) and has contributed to the delay in implementation of that project.

B.   System Performance:

On many occasions we have noticed a considerable degradation in system performance. Extracts from the CONIF III application which normally take less than 20 minutes to run have been taking four hours to complete. Frequently, it has taken over two hours to input six invoices. On 14 September, for example, it took all morning to input three contracts. In addition, when our financial users try to contact OIT service components they often get the recorded telephone message, "All lines busy." This spotty performance creates a whole series of inefficiencies and frustrations. A special GIMS task force has been established to investigate these problems and several promising ideas have been identified. Actions to date, however, have not been successful in resolving these deficiencies.

C.   Output Services Support:

In May, the OIT component responsible for printing and distributing reports reduced its operating hours by 50 percent. This reduction has caused serious problems when our nightly processing aborts. On at least three separate occasions, the delay in receiving the printouts necessary to remedy the processing problems has resulted in a four hour delay in the availability of our production data bases. We are working with the Operations Support Branch to prevent these situations in the future.

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D. System Administration Services:

The staffing of the OIT component responsible for systems administration has been recently reduced by 50 percent. Moreover, most of the people staffing the component are relatively new and inexperienced. Because of this staff reduction, we have been informed that routine administrative services such as issuing new VM passwords, changing disk accesses, etc. will now take approximately 10-14 workdays. On several occasions it has taken over a month to obtain these services. This is unacceptable. A maximum of three to five day turnaround for these services is essential.

E. Staff Programming Support:

Over the past several years the staff programming resources assigned to the maintenance and enhancement of financial applications have dwindled. At present there is only one full time programmer. The contractor resources recently assigned to this task have been faced with a significant learning curve and are not fully productive at this time. As a result, maintenance and enhancement activities have been severely impacted and the backlog of outstanding work orders has increased dramatically. Current financial applications are extremely sophisticated, requiring trained and experienced staff resources to provide timely service and continuity.

3. I realize that these problems are complex, but I am concerned that we seem to be making little progress in resolving them. We must find ways soon to improve data processing support to financial operations; otherwise, our ability to support the Agency financial management mission effectively will be in jeopardy.

4. I would appreciate any additional steps you could take to ensure prompt resolution of some of these problems.

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Daniel A. Childs, Jr.

cc: Deputy Director for Administration
     Director of Logistics
     Comptroller

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